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Top spy 'sold plans after jail escape'

By IAN BRODIE in Los Angeles

(As Received)

A intriguing claim that one of America's most damaging spies continued to send details about top-secret reconnaissance satellites to the Russians after his conviction and escape from prison was made by a former convict yesterday.

If true, the story means that the spy, Christopher Boyce, now 27, may have been correct when he said he had buried classified Desert before his arrest.

It also means that he was never totally "de-briefed" by the CIA, as was claimed at the time.

Douglas Wargo, a former journalist jailed for postal fraud, claimed in San Diego, California, that last year he flew to Lima, Peru, and delivered documents from Boyce to a man with a Russian-sounding accent.

The man leafed through the documents for 45 minutes without comment before paying Wargo £1,600.

Wargo said he had been introduced to Boyce by another ex-inmate in San Diego, which is close to the Mexican border, and was told the package contained "the KH-11 manuscript."

KH-11 is a CIA name for the "Keyhole" satellite, a device capable of making observations on Russia, as if through a keyhole. Boyce gave away details of at least two other satellite systems, creating consternation at the highest levels of national security.

40 year sentence

Wargo said he met Boyce in March last year. Two months earlier Boyce had escaped from Lompoc medium-security prison, north of Los Angeles. He had been sentenced to 40 years for spying in 1977.

With Andrew Lee, a boyhood friend, he sold the secrets to the Russian in Mexico City. He had worked in the so-called "Black vault." The code room of a Southern California firm which supplied and operated top-secret satellites for the CIA.

Boyce, a brilliant youth, told Wargo he needed money on the run and paid him £95 plus expenses to deliver the package.

Wargo said he delivered the £1,600 to Boyce in Tijuana, Mexico, just across the border from San Diego.

Subsequently, last October, Boyce telephoned him asking for a small loan and Wargo invited him to his San Diego home. Some nine hours after Boyce departed, it was raided by federal agents, part of a task force which has been seeking Boyce on the run.